

# The Missouri Overweight and Obesity **Observer**

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

A compilation of the latest news relating to overweight and obesity from around the state, nation and world.

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*NOTE: Some web pages may have expired since news pages are updated so frequently.*

## USDA revamps food pyramid to better serve the overweight

The USDA is overhauling the food pyramid in recognition of the fact that almost two-thirds of American people are overweight or obese, and that most of us are sedentary. The new food pyramid recommends cutting calories drastically, in some cases up to 1,000 calories a day. Nutritionists, however, are already leery of the new recommendations pointing out that they are confusing and unlikely to be followed, according to a report from NPR's *All Things Considered* by Richard Knox.

For full story, go to: <http://www.npr.org/features/feature.php?wfId=1428319>

## Feds to try community-based programs to fight obesity

Years of warnings from federal and local health officials about the dangers of being overweight appear to have gone unheeded as America's girth continues to expand. According to a report by *MSNBC*, the federal government has decided to take its fight to prevent obesity, and all its associated health problems and costs, to the streets. More specifically to the neighborhood streets where community programs are being launched to promote healthier eating. This month, Michigan and Boston communities become the first of about a dozen recipients of \$13.6 million in federal grants to target unhealthy habits locally. Another \$125 million is being requested next year to fund dozens more such programs. U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson hopes to see cities eventually competing to be called the healthiest.

For full story, go to: <http://www.msnbc.com/news/967310.asp?0cv=HB10#BODY>

## Hormone may be new magic bullet for weight control

A hormone, normally found in the gut, may be effective in helping overweight and obese individuals to eat less, according to a report in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The hormone, peptide YY, reduces food intake by modulating appetite circuits in the hypothalamus. In a double-blind, placebo-controlled study, 12 obese individuals and 12 lean subjects were given infusions of ppy two hours prior to a buffet dinner. Both normal-weight people and overweight ones ate roughly a third less after getting the infusions. "PYY signals the brain that a person is full," researcher Stephen R. Bloom, MD, was quoted by *WebMD*. "We have shown that overweight people have PYY deficiencies and that their response to PYY infusions is the same as in thin people. They eat less because they are not as hungry." The study also found that the group did not eat more later to make up for the less food eaten just after the PYY infusions.

For full story, go to: <http://content.health.msn.com/content/article/73/82024.htm?pagenumber=1>

## New tool facilitates talking about childhood obesity

A bilingual print and web-based guide has been developed under the auspices of the American Dietetic Association that promises to help doctors, nurses and other health care professionals more easily communicate with parents and families about childhood obesity. *Healthy Habits for Healthy Kids* has been reviewed by more than 200 physicians and a panel of registered dietitians from across the country, and is available free to download off the web at [http://www.bcbsmo.com/health\\_links/index.html](http://www.bcbsmo.com/health_links/index.html). The guide provides concrete recommendations based on the clinical evaluation of registered dietitians and gives health

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care professionals a much-needed vehicle for discussing childhood obesity with families.

*For full story, go to:* [http://www.bcbsmo.com/health\\_links/index.html](http://www.bcbsmo.com/health_links/index.html)

## Study links obesity to increased risk of breast cancer

Studies have linked obesity to an increased risk of cancer including breast cancer in postmenopausal women. A new study now explains why. According to research published in the Aug. 20th issue of the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, obesity increases the risk of breast cancer in postmenopausal women by increasing the amount of estrogens in the blood. High levels of estrogen have been linked as a causative factor for breast cancer.

*For full story, go to:* <http://asia.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=healthNews&storyID=3303518>

## Obesity risks worse than smoking, drinking or poverty

Once again the risks related to obesity are being compared to those of smoking, drinking and poverty. Two RAND researchers are now saying that among the four risks to life and health, obesity is the most serious problem with its impact on chronic health conditions and significantly higher health costs. Health economist Roland Sturm and psychiatrist Kenneth Wells examined the comparative effects of obesity, smoking, heavy drinking and poverty on chronic health conditions and health expenditures. They found that not only was obesity linked to chronic health conditions and higher health costs but that it affects more people than smoking, heavy drinking or poverty. Drs. Sturm and Wells both noted that, although obesity is a recognized health risk, there have been relatively few public policies designed to reduce its prevalence.

*For full story, go to:* <http://www.rand.org/publications/RB/RB4549/>

## Children may face shorter lives than parents due to obesity

A new book by an expert on food and nutrition from Yale University warns that children today may be the first generation in history to reverse the trend of living longer than their parents. The culprit is the prevalence of life-shortening obesity brought on by cultural influences. In the book, *Food Fight*, the author Kelly Brownell warned, "The food and physical activity environments we offer our children is a recipe for obesity, and much human suffering will be the result." The author, who is the chair of Yale's Department of Psychology and director of the Yale Center for Eating and Weight Disorders, lists the leading causes of the growing obesity among children: super-sized portions in restaurants, convenience stores and other venues; sedentary behavior encouraged by computers, video games and television; communities designed to make it difficult to bike or walk to schools and work; product placement of foods in television and movies; schools relying on income from soft drink and snack food companies; and constant food advertising aimed at children. The book is expected to be on the market this fall and is published by McGraw Hill.

*For full story, go to:* [http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2003-08/you-yew082203.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2003-08/you-yew082203.php)

## New AAP policy focuses on combatting childhood obesity

The dramatic increase in the prevalence of overweight children, and the associated health and financial burdens, are issues pediatricians face on a daily basis. The American Academy of Pediatrics, an organization of 57,000 primary care pediatricians, instituted a new policy this month that proposes strategies to foster prevention and early identification of overweight and obesity in children. The policy urges that significant changes in a child's BMI be recognized and addressed before the child becomes severely overweight. The policy points out that some parents may not recognize or accept the potential risk of their child being overweight. It also notes that guidance or treatment intervention before obesity has become severe will likely be more successful.

*For full story:* <http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/augobesity.htm>